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June 7, 2019

Brian Buchner
Chief, Homelessness Operations & Street Strategies
Office of Mayor Eric Garcetti
City of Los Angeles
200 North Spring Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

Dear Mr. Buchner,

We appreciate our productive discussion with City of Los Angeles staff at our June 5, 2019 meeting related to illegal trash dumping in Skid Row and acknowledge there are multiple concerns in the area. The discussion focused on current efforts and potential long-term solutions to prevent illegal dumping and to mitigate unsanitary conditions in homeless encampments. Of concern to us are the public health risks that can arise from the persistence of trash (waste) illegally dumped in public spaces, rodent infestations, and lack of adequate facilities for personal hygiene and sanitation for the homeless encampments in that area. We agree to work with you within each of our authorities and regulatory powers to address violations of illegal trash dumping and to advise you on any needed modifications to the City's rodent control plan.

To address the unsanitary conditions and to minimize the public health risks, we believe it is essential for the City of Los Angeles to take the following actions.

Action 1—Illegal Waste Dumping: Implement a long-term plan to address illegal waste dumping to reduce the harborage of and potential food sources for rodents.

In this regard, we agreed the City would provide its inventory of facilities subject to the City Municipal Code requiring every commercial business to have solid waste services in place, and for the City to investigate and take action against unlawful dumping. This information will be useful during our Department's routine or complaint-based inspections of facilities operating under a public health permit. We will also provide our inventory of regulated facilities to similarly assist the City's surveillance and enforcement efforts.

Action 2—Rodent Control: Initiate and maintain routine rodent suppression activities, including identification and destruction of rodent burrows, to reduce the risks of diseases carried by rodents and the vectors they carry.

We have assisted the City team with inspecting and identifying rodent issues during the typhus outbreak and, if needed, can provide our findings again to inform the City's rodent suppression activities and plan development. We have also provided recommendations for controlling rodents to all cities in Attachment B of our letter dated March 22, 2019, on "Guidance on actions for cities to prevent endemic flea-borne typhus infections".

Action 3—Encampments: If encampments are allowed to persist, do the following to reduce the risk of disease spread among those living in the encampment:

- (a) Establish and maintain public sanitation systems, including adequate toilet facilities and associated handwashing stations provisioned with soap, water, and paper towels;
- (b) Establish and maintain a plan for timely identification and subsequent cleaning and disinfection of accumulated feces, urine and other waste; and
- (c) Provide adequate waste receptacles and routine collection services to ensure waste does not accumulate on the ground surfaces at and around encampments, which are often used as "cover" for illegal waste dumpers.

During our meeting, there was a request for assistance with support for toilets and handwashing stations. Unfortunately, and as previously communicated, we cannot provide financial support for such activities in incorporated cities.

In addition to the above, the City holds responsibility for enforcing its own municipal code with regard to the requirement for every commercial business to have solid waste services in place, and the investigation and enforcement of unlawful depositing of solid waste on the ground.

We look forward to our next meeting to continue our collaboration and to review progress in implementing the actions referenced above to protect the public from these issues of public health concern. If you should have any questions in the interim, please do not hesitate to contact Liza Frias, Director of Environmental Health at (626) 430-5374.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Muntu Davis MD, MPH".

Muntu Davis, M.D., M.P.H.
County Health Officer

MD:jv

Attachment

c: Christina Miller, Deputy Mayor, City Homelessness Initiatives